

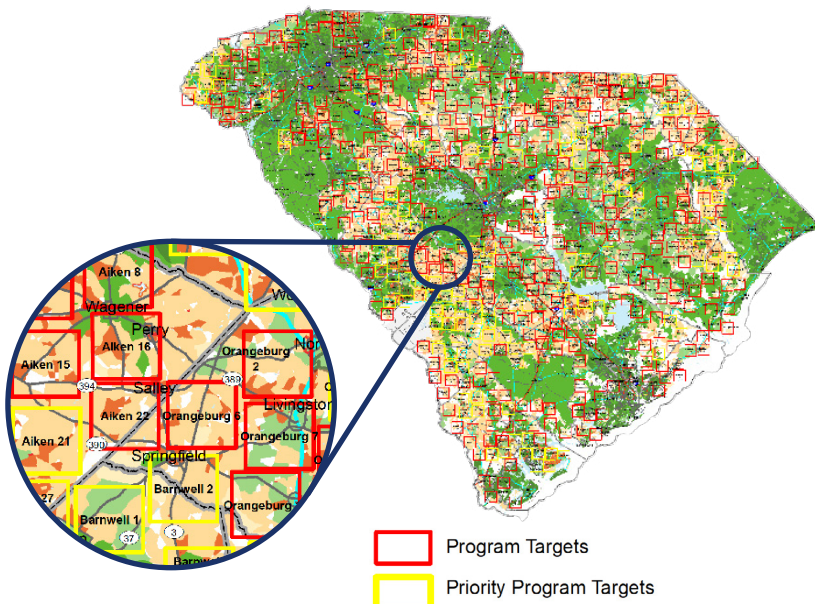
Broadband Infrastructure Program Completes \$17 Million CARES Investment to Expand Broadband Access in South Carolina

The SC Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) has completed the administration of the Broadband Infrastructure Program to help expand broadband access to almost 20,000 structures in South Carolina. The goal of the Broadband Infrastructure Program was to help aid the expansion of broadband infrastructure with emphasized services to rural communities and communities with a high prevalence of COVID-19 or with demographic characteristics consistent with risk factors for COVID-19.

The \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security or "CARES Act" was passed by Congress to help provide relief to the United States economy from the COVID-19 pandemic. The South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 142 authorizing the ORS to expend up to \$50 million for broadband initiatives related to COVID-19. Included in this \$50 million was funding to expand broadband access through the Broadband Infrastructure Program.

The ORS launched the program in August 2020 by engaging Revolution D, Inc. to identify priority areas of the state that were unserved, impacted by COVID-19, and that if broadband were available, would support distance learning, telehealth, and/or teleworking. The ORS funded 78 applications for projects in 27 counties across the state. Companies were required to provide 50 percent of the funding for the project and CARES Act funds covered the other 50 percent.

Areas of Need with Priority and Program Targets Map



AT A GLANCE

BIP Wired Deployments

Allocation: \$29,700,000

Total Funds Expended: \$17,157,488

Applications Funded: 78

Companies: 14

Counties Served: 27

Program Targets: 59

Priority Targets: 35

Households Served: 2,169

Households Passed: 18,574

Businesses Passed: 1,000

Community Anchor Points Passed: 202

Educational Institutions Passed: 38

Health-care Facilities Passed: 29



The ORS created a program overview, various press releases, an application, guidelines, funding agreements, and reporting tools. Until completion, companies were required to submit Financial Progress Reports and Construction Progress Reports to the ORS. Several calls were held with participating companies, and the ORS also held a webinar for the companies about how to submit expenses and invoices for payment. In addition, the ORS held a webinar in October 2020 updating the public on all CARES Act initiatives.

In December 2020, 14 companies completed approximately \$34 million in infrastructure projects, helping to expand broadband availability to homes, businesses, educational institutions, and health-care facilities in South Carolina. \$17 million in funding for these projects came from CARES Act funds.



Allendale Pilot Project

The ORS also partnered with SCETV, USC Salkehatchie, Allendale County School District, the Allendale Hampton Jasper Regional Library, and Revolution D, Inc. to launch a pilot program allowing free Wi-Fi to students and/or the public together with residential broadband service in Allendale County. Project partners worked with Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative to get fiber backhaul and Dominion Energy to get electricity to the SCETV towers located in Allendale County. Equipment was installed on the towers that will provide approximately 1,000 residents with fixed wireless (citizen broadband radio service) access to broadband service.



Questions?

Broadband Information
Broadband@ORS.SC.GOV

Potential Number of Impacted Households: 1,000

Public Wi-Fi Maximum Download/Upload Speeds: 50 Mbps/10 Mbps

Residential Network Maximum Download/Upload Speeds: 78 Mbps/6 Mbps

More information can be found at ORS.SC.GOV/broadband

